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SPARTANBURG MAN RECEIVES 21-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR SHOOTING DEATH

A Spartanburg man received a 21-year prison sentence today after a jury decided that he shot his brother to death.

Wendell Williams, 51, was found guilty of voluntary manslaughter at the conclusion of a two-day jury trial. The defendant will serve 85 percent of the prison sentence before he is eligible for release.

The defendant used a sawed-off shotgun to shoot his 42-year-old brother, Joe Williams Jr., in the early morning of Sept. 26, 2008. Spartanburg police found Joe Williams, Jr. on the front stoop of his Farley Avenue home with a gunshot wound to his upper right leg. The victim bled to death.

Principal Deputy Solicitor Barry Barnette utilized eyewitness testimony and evidence collected at the crime scene to prove his case.

Wendell visited Joe at his home and initiated an argument about money he claimed his brother owed him, according to witness testimony.

When police arrived, a witness identified Wendell as the shooter and reported that he fled the crime scene in the aftermath of the violence.

Wendell Williams turned himself into police hours after the shooting. He also testified during the trial and told jurors he didn't mean to shoot his brother.

"A simple family argument turned violent in a hurry," Barnette said. "It was a senseless tragedy."

Wendell Williams' prior criminal record included convictions for violation of the pistol act, criminal domestic violence, receiving stolen goods and habitual traffic offender.

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